

U.S. House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF
OFFICIAL CONDUCT

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL MEMBERS, OFFICERS, AND EMPLOYEES

FROM: Committee on Standards of Official Conduct

Zoe Lofgren, Chair

Jo Bonner, Ranking Republican Member

SUBJECT: Annual Ethics Training Requirement for 2009

House Rule XI, clause 3(a)(6)(B)(ii) requires each House employee to certify to the Standards Committee by January 31 of each year that the individual completed ethics training during the preceding year. This memorandum outlines the ethics training requirement for all House employees for calendar year 2009.

Since the annual ethics training requirement was first added to the House Rules in 2007, the Committee has determined that the purpose of the rule would best be served by requiring all House employees to take one hour of ethics training per year. All new employees must complete their initial training *within 60 days of the first day of their House employment*. In addition, the Committee requires all senior staff to take an additional hour of specialized training on topics related to senior staff at least once per Congress.¹

The remainder of this memorandum summarizes the 2009 ethics training requirement for various categories of House employees:

New Employees. A "new" House employee for purposes of the training requirement is an individual who first began employment with the House after November 1, 2008 and did not complete ethics training in 2008. Any former House employee from the last Congress who returns to House employment in the 111th Congress after a gap of more than 60 consecutive calendar days is considered to be a "new" employee. Interns who are paid for more than 60 days are also required to comply with this requirement.²

- New employees *must* complete training within 60 days of beginning House employment.
- New employees who work in Capitol Hill offices are required to attend *live* training sessions.

¹ PLEASE NOTE: prior attendance at a Senate ethics training seminar does not satisfy any House employee's ethics requirement for 2009.

² Detailees, fellows, unpaid interns and any individuals who are employed by the House and paid for less than 60 days are not required to attend ethics training in 2009.

- New employees who work in offices not on Capitol Hill may watch the "New District Staff" training video available on HouseNet.

NOTE: new employees will *not* receive credit for attending or watching any training sessions other than those specifically designated "new employees" or "New District Staff."

Existing Employees. All House employees who are not "new" employees must take one hour of ethics training during calendar year 2009. There are three options for fulfilling this training requirement:

- 1) Attending a live training session on "gifts" or other general ethics topics;
- 2) Watching a training video on HouseNet regarding "gifts," "campaign activity" or other general ethics topics; *or*
- 3) Completing one of the training programs on HouseNet, which are interactive quizzes on topics such as general ethics rules or gifts and travel.

NOTE: existing employees will *not* receive 2009 credit for attending or watching any "new employee" or "senior staff" training sessions listed in those sections of this memorandum.

Senior Staff. "Senior staff" refers to any employee paid at the senior staff level, which is \$117,787 or more for calendar year 2009. In general, senior staff employees are required to complete *two* ethics trainings in order to satisfy the Committee's training requirement.

- New senior staff must complete new employee training within 60 days of beginning House employment (described above) *and* complete a second hour of specialized "senior staff" training during calendar year 2009.
- Existing senior staff must complete one hour of ethics training during calendar year 2009 for all existing staff (described above) *and* complete a second hour of specialized "senior staff" training before the end of the 111th Congress.
- Existing employees who start 2009 at below the senior staff rate, but receive a raise such that they become "senior staff" must complete the second hour of specialized "senior staff" training before the end of the 111th Congress.
- There are two options for fulfilling the specialized "senior staff" training requirement:
 - 1) Watching the "senior staff" training video available on HouseNet; *or*
 - 2) Attending a live "senior staff" or "financial disclosure" training session.³

NOTE: senior staff employees who completed a second hour of specialized "senior staff" training during the 110th Congress are required to take an *additional* hour of specialized "senior staff" training session before the end of the 111th Congress.

³ In contrast with last year's practice, the 2009 financial disclosure training sessions will only count towards this second hour of senior staff training and will not satisfy the general one-hour training requirement for existing employees.

Documenting Your Attendance⁴

For live ethics training sessions: (1) Sign in at the start of the training; and (2) remain for the entire session. Any employee who attends a live training session but fails to sign in on the attendance sheet or leaves before the hour is completed will *not* be given credit towards the ethics training requirement.⁵

For online ethics programs: (1) Fill out the certificate of completion available after completing the online video or training module; (2) have it signed by your staff supervisor (e.g., chief of staff or district director); and (3) fax it to the Standards Committee at (202) 225-7392 as soon as possible following completion of the training. Shared staff (*i.e.*, individuals who work for more than one House Member or committee) should indicate on their form each office for which they work, but only one supervisor's signature is required.

The calendar of upcoming live training sessions for 2009 is available on the Committee's website: <http://ethics.house.gov>. Questions about any aspect of the ethics training requirement should be directed to Committee staff at (202) 225-7103.

The next page contains a checklist summarizing the available options for each type of House employee for ease of reference throughout 2009.

⁴ The Committee will provide directions regarding the year-end 2009 certification process for Members and potential penalties for failure to fulfill the training requirement later this calendar year.

⁵ As in 2008, proof of attendance at live training sessions is confined to the sign-in sheets and the Committee will enter all information from those sheets into our internal database. No additional paperwork or forms are required for individual attendees to certify attendance at these sessions.

2009 ETHICS TRAINING REQUIREMENT FOR HOUSE EMPLOYEES

New Employees: Complete ONE of the following within 60 days of employment:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "New employee" live training session
(<i>required</i> for Capitol Hill employees) | <input type="checkbox"/> "New district staff" video training
(District staff <i>only</i>) |
|--|---|

Existing Employees: Complete ONE of the following in 2009:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Live training session on "gifts"
or other general ethics topics | <input type="checkbox"/> Video training on "gifts or other
general ethics topics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethics training quiz on HouseNet | |

New Senior Staff: Complete BOTH of the following in 2009:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "New employee" training within
60 days of employment | <input type="checkbox"/> "Senior staff" training video or
live session |
|--|---|

Existing Senior Staff: Complete BOTH of the following:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Existing employee" training video,
live session, or training module
(by end of 2009) | <input type="checkbox"/> "Senior staff" training video or
live session
(by end of 111 th Congress) |
|--|---|